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ABSTRACT

The two goals underlying this study were to provide the first data on how educators feel about learners' emotional displays, and to relate those viewpoints to their interactive behavior in specific learning environments. Prior to this investigation there was no literature addressing the socialization of emotion in schools, in fact, the bulk of discussion of displays of emotion in schools reflected the posture that children's emoting is intrusive to the goals of the classroom. The role of most educators in the "emotional development of children" has been as detectors of disturbances; their role as integral members of the socialization process had been ignored. This study provides insight into an educator's role in the process of emotion socialization and examines the relationship between educators' conceptions about emotional displays and their interaction with learners. (25 references) (Author)

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ENHANCING HUMAN LEARNING THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF AFFECT AND TECHNOLOGY

by

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March 1990

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The two goals underlying this study were to provide the first data on how educators feel about learners' emotional displays, and to relate those viewpoints to their interactive behavior in specific learning environments. Prior to this investigation there was no literature addressing the socialization of emotion in schools, in fact, the bulk of discussion of displays of emotion in schools reflected the posture that children's emoting is intrusive to the goals of the classroom. The role of most educators in the "emotional development of children" has been as detectors of disturbances; their role as integral members of the socialization process had been ignored. This study provides insight into an educator's role in the process of emotion socialization and examines the relationship between educators' conceptions about emotional displays and their interaction with learners.

BACKGROUND

Dominant in contemporary American education is an emphasis on efficiency and rationalization of the educational process. Instructional technology is a fast-growing field with the vision "of bringing to bear on human beings the most sophisticated set of procedures and machines that can be designed for making learning readily available to all people, and in assuring its effectiveness in developing the capabilities that are learning's results."[1] Instruction is the "means" to curricular "ends," where the curriculum is all the planned learning outcomes for which the educational institution is responsible.[2] Increased efficiency and increasingly powerful teaching strategies, notwithstanding, there is an enduring sense of failure. Students, particularly those attending inner-city schools in large metropolitan areas, continue to fail to achieve even basic minimum educational standards. The difficulties lie neither with flaws in the cognitive instruction strategies nor the technological advances that have been developed but in the fact that they represent only part of the picture.

The emotional development of children has been studied by psychologists and psychiatrists for many years. The study has taken the form, largely, of investigation into processes and variables exacerbating "disturbances" of emotion. The recent shift of focus from "disturbed" to "normal" development, i.e., emotion socialization, has yet to be investigated relative to specific learning environments. It has been suggested that the goal of socialization "is to raise children to behave as do other members of the group...some socialization pressures cause individuals of the group to act not similarly but 'idiosyncratically'."[3] It is through socialization that people learn to mask their true feelings by controlling facial response [4] [5] [6], develop impulse control[7] [8], and dissociate emotional state from emotional expression[9] [10] [11] [12]. The process of emotion socialization is said to be associated with two classes of processes: 1) direct effects, in which conditions are arranged for the child to be socialized

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[1]R.M. Gagne & L.J. Briggs, Principles of Instructional Design (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, NY, 1987)

[2]W.J. Popham & E.L. Baker, Systematic Instruction (Prentice-Hall, NJ, 1970)

[3]L. Michalson & M. Lewis, in The Socialization of Emotions (Plenum, NY, 1985)

[4]P. Ekman & W. Friesen, J Personality and Social Psychology, 29, 188-198 (1974)

[5]C.E. Izard, Human Emotions (Plenum, NY, 1977)

[6]G.E. Littlepage & M.H. Pineault, Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin, 5, 325-328. (1979)

[7]J. Aronfreed, Conduct and Conscience (Academic, NY, 1968)

[8]M.K. Rothbart & D. Derryberry, in Advances in Developmental Psychology (Erlbaum, NJ, 1981)

[9]P.L. Harris, T. Olthof, & M.M. Terwogt, J Child Psychology & Psychiatry, 45, 247-261 (1981)

[10]C.Z. Malatesta & J.M. Haviland, Child Development, 53, 991-1003 (1982)

[11]C. Saarni, Developmental Psychology, 15, 424-429 (1979)

[12]C. Saarni, in The Socialization of Emotions (Plenum, NY, 1985)

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in a particular way, e.g., emotion labeling, and 2) indirect effects, in which the child is socialized through vicarious observations and subsequently modulates expression or reconstructs expectancies[13] [14] [15].

Certain sets of emotion-specific rules are communicated (implicitly or explicitly) to children, who then refine their emotional behavior and experience according to principle. Emotions are socialized congruent with (1) the caregiver's life experiences and understandings with respect to a particular emotion, (2) his or her beliefs, values, and child-rearing goals with respect to that emotion, and (3) the behavioral and situational context in which the emotion is expressed.[16] This study looked at the attitudes educators hold toward the emotional displays of learners and investigated the manner in which those attitudes manifest.

DESIGN AND METHODS OF THIS STUDY

This research focused on very new questions and required a comprehensive assessment of educators. The educators "of choice" were engaged in kindergarten through adult education classes (n = 85) in urban, suburban, and rural environments. The data was gathered through a modified version of the Survey of Parental Responses to Emotional Displays in Children[17] which was developed to assess parents' beliefs about how they should respond to various emotional displays in children. It measures agreement/disagreement (5-point Likert) on the manifestation of emotions in seven domains (over 44 items) and attempts to identify strategies of emotion socialization. The modified instrument measured and identified those same things as its source instrument but reflected educator-specific situations. The design of this study allowed for comparisons of educators' understandings of an array of emotions, his or her beliefs, values, and goals with respect to those emotions and the particular contexts in which they are expressed, and the manner in which those beliefs manifest in specific learning environments. Analyses of variance were used to compare educator beliefs and their relation to different educational environments.

RESULTS

The questionnaire results indicate overwhelming concensus (>90%) of agreement or disagreement and a clearly split response pattern (agreement AND disagreement each > 20%) for a third set. The table below is a sample of items from each of the sets; each item reads "A teacher should..."

AGREE	*...try to find out why a student is sad.*
	...,most importantly, find out what's wrong when a student is in pain.
	...soothe and comfort a frightened student.
	...try to provide interesting environments for a student so as to avoid boredom.
	...encourage a student to become involved in and pursue hobbies or topics in which (s)he is interested.
DISAGREE	*...scold a moping student because it leads to laziness.*
	...ignore a student who complains about pain -- it's the best way to teach about pain.
	...try to ignore a scared student so that (s)he can work it out on h(is/er) own.
	...allow an angry student to yell in the classroom.
	...ignore a student who repeatedly asks questions because your business should come first.
SPLIT	*...try to take a student's mind off of sadness the student is feeling.*
	...cuddle a crying student.
	...instruct a student not to make faces at tasks the student does not enjoy.
	...allows students to express their feelings freely when engaging in unpleasant activities.
	...encourage a student to express angry feelings.

[13] S. Feinman, Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 28, 445-470 (1982)

[14] S. Feinman & M. Lewis, Child Development, 54, 878-887 (1983)

[15] E.Z. Tronick, H. Als, et al, J American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 17, 1-13 (1978)

[16] P. Miller & L.L. Sperry, Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 33, 1-31 (1987)

[17] L. Stettner,L. Abramson,D. Jenkins,& O. Haynes, Survey of Parental Responses to Emotional Displays in Children (1983)

There were 35 items which could clearly be scored on a normative-humanistic[18] continuum and of those, 24 were responsed to humanistically by teachers, 4 elicited a normative response, and 7 were split. Overall, the strongest concensus of a normative response was the teachers' tendency to agree with item, "*...make sure a happy student doesn't get out of control*" (64% agreement).

DISCUSSION

Careful analysis of the data indicates, overall, that educators employ "humanistic" or accepting attitudes about emotional displays in learners. There appear to be two processes at work that shift basically humanistic philosophies toward more normative responses: physical contact, e.g., "*...cuddle a sad student*," and role demands, e.g., "*...allow a happy student to make a lot of noise and jump around whether (s)he is in the classroom or not*." Curiously, parents seem to have no difficulty around these two issues; in the domain of interest, where teachers are clearly accepting of displays, parents report that interest impinges upon other role demands, e.g., the child who continually questions while dinner preparation is taking place.[19] While the teacher may be "in loco parentis" their role demands are clearly different from that of the parent. It should be noted that more normative postures have been associated with pessismism, humiliation, and gloom; where risk is discouraged or encouraged but only in connection with the norm; the general feeling reflects that "learners should be seen and not heard;" and most strikingly, where "learning and novelty is...minimized."[20] "The 44 items, each analyzed across environments, indicate significant ($p<.05$) differences between educator attitudes and utilization of display rules, i.e., educators in urban settings state an assumed responsibility for teaching learners to "not show it when feeling distressed or disgusted. Given the provocative nature of our results, we are now examining larger numbers of educators and extending the study to explore the relationship between educator attitudes and its effect on subsequent interaction with learners; we are pursuing the dynamics of this effect by studying aspects of teacher-student interaction directly. Further, we will be assessing the effect of socialization factors over the long-term by carrying out follow-up assessment of both educators and learners over a period of several years and across an array of environments.

SUMMARY

These findings reveal the first evidence of the impact of educator attitudes on learning. The implications of these findings are vast: if the learning environment demands that those individuals responsible for delivery of instruction assume a "normative" posture despite a humanistic philosophy and, as a result, minimize learning (cognitive, socio-affective), the instructional designer must address learner needs at the outset of the instructional development process; prescriptions for learning demand that attention be paid to not only the knowledge imparted but the feelings transmitted.

While it is known that cognition is imposed upon by intense arousal[21 22 23 24 25] and the way a learner feels about herself influences her learning[26 27] the role an educator plays in the process has been virtually ignored. It is incumbent upon the educator to view the learner as a whole person. "The expression of feelings, attitudes, and values should not be incidental. Providing learners with the skills necessary to develop attitudes consistent with a system of beliefs is fundamental."[28] If instructional technology does, indeed, "make learning readily available to all people," it is imperative that the instructional technologist accept the fusion of cognition and affect in the design process.

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[28]L. Kaplan, ibid.